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ABSTRACT

The statistics on vandalism compiled in this report were obtained from a survey of all 717 schools in suburban Cook County and give a broad overview of the extent, frequency, and financial costs incurred as a result of vandalism in the schools. The survey includes information on methods of protection and surveillance such as security personnel, mechanical and electronic protection systems, and fire alarm and heating system monitoring; specific information on accidental and deliberate vandalism inside and outside school buildings; hazards such as accidental and deliberate fires, explosions and floods; expulsions, suspensions, and police referrals as a result of apprehended vandals; and the approximate costs to school districts for all vandalism. (Author/MLF)

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RESEARCH REPORT

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SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

VANDALISM SURVEY AND REPORT

#3217

A SERVICE OF
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE REGION
OF COOK COUNTY

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PURPOSE OF STUDY
AND
SOURCE OF DATA

The statistics on vandalism compiled in this report are an attempt to give the reader a broad overview of the extent, frequency and financial costs incurred as a result of vandalism in the public schools of suburban Cook County

The actual data collection took place from February through April 1974 and was compiled from a survey sent from the Educational Service Region of Cook County in February 1974 requesting information on vandalism. The following report is a result of the tabulation of survey responses.

The survey includes information on methods of protection and surveillance such as security personnel, mechanical and electronic protection systems, and fire alarm and heating system monitoring; specific information on accidental and deliberate vandalism inside and outside school buildings; hazards such as accidental and deliberate fires, explosions and floods; expulsions, suspensions and police referrals as a result of apprehended vandals; and the approximate costs to school districts for all vandalism. The statistics in each category include the tabulation of the number of responses by school from all 717 schools in suburban Cook County. Total elementary enrollment for the 1973-74 school year was 305,365. Total secondary enrollment was 156,976. Total suburban public school enrollment for the 1973-74 school year was 462,341.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Methods of Protection and Surveillance: includes security personnel, police personnel, private security agencies, mechanical burglary protection systems such as burglar alarms, ultrasonic and infrared equipment, electric eyes, magnetic circuit breakers, and security lights.

Vandalism: wanton, deliberate and/or malicious destruction, and defacement of property rendering inoperable or unusable property of schools such as windows, equipment and facilities.

Bomb Incidents: the threat or use of a simulated or real incendiary or explosive device which may include bomb threats, required evacuations and/or accomplished bombings.

Internal Vandalism: damage occurring within school buildings to washrooms, supply rooms, library, cafeteria, equipment, furniture, internal windows and doors, loss or damage to documents, defacing of walls and furniture, and loss of petty cash.

External Vandalism: damage occurring outside of school buildings to exterior walls, windows, doors, lighting, grounds, school buses, playgrounds and equipment and athletic fields.

Hazards: fires, explosions, floods, bomb incidents.

Limitations of the Topic

The survey and report is limited to the investigation of vandalism in the elementary and secondary public schools in suburban Cook County--648 elementary schools and 69 secondary schools--and covers the period of Fall 1973 to Spring 1974.

An accurate up-to-date count of the frequency and costs of vandalism for the full school year is not available since the schools provided information on the period of time from the beginning of the 1973-74 school year up to the mailing of the survey results to this office. The time spread is between February 10 to May 1, 1974. All figures, therefore, will be conservative since the full year is not covered.

There is an additional limitation in the interpretation of the data since not all of the 717 schools reported complete information in response to the survey.

Additional information which may not be reflected in the approximate costs of vandalism to the school districts are the "hidden costs." These costs include repairs in the schools completed by maintenance and janitorial staff and not by outside firms; damage costs that have not been reported by school officials; and the enormous costs of lost teaching and learning time because of damaged equipment.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The cost of vandalism to the Cook County suburban schools from September 1973 through April 1974 is $1,340,822.00. This includes $586,951.00 for vandalism occurring inside school buildings and $548,601.00 for vandalism occuring outside school buildings, as well as $202,089.00 for fires, explosions and other such hazards.

Internal vandalism includes damage to libraries, learning resource centers, defacing of walls, damage to cafeterias, equipment, washrooms, lockers, furniture, broken windows, etc. External vandalism deals with the outside of the building including defacing of outside walls, damage to windows, grounds and landscaping as well as playground equipment such as school buses and outside school lighting.

If the total of $1,340,822.00 were divided equally between school districts, this serious crime problem costs the average Cook County suburban school district $9,376.00 and the average school $1,870.00. Estimated crime costs nationally in the schools for the 1972-73 school year were $500 million or $10.87 per pupil, roughly the same amount spent on textbooks. Although statistics on the extent and costs of crime in schools are scarce on a national or local level, vandalism and malicious mischief remain the most prevalent type of crime, attributable to malicious destruction.

Methods of Protection and Surveillance

113 schools employ 233 security personnel for safety and security during regular school days. Among these, 29 police personnel work in 38 schools, 31 schools employ a private security agency and 36 schools have security people in uniform patrolling the schools.

Although 75% of the vandalism to the schools occurs after school hours, only 118 or 16.5% of the 717 suburban schools have security patrols working from school closing to school opening in the morning. 36 schools have security patrols working from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. shift; 55 schools have patrols from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m.; and 27 schools from 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Only 27% or 192 of the 717 schools have some sort of mechanical or electronic burglary protection system. Most frequently mentioned of these systems are ultrasonic and infrared protection systems as well as electric eyes, magnetic circuit breaker, monitored telephone line, wired detectors, magnetic door switches and contact circuits.

Vandalism - Internal

The total financial cost to schools for internal vandalism is $586,951.00. The major portion of this amount, 19% or 112,515, is a result of defacing and damage to walls, furniture, drinking fountains, etc. An additional 18%, $108,261 was incurred from damage to library books, supplies and audio-visual equipment.

An additional 33% or $196,332 of the internal vandalism costs is attributable to the following: (in descending order of cost)

Damage to furniture	$ 72,755.00
Damage to washrooms	65,167.00
Damage to internal windows and doors	58,410.00

The remaining 30% of internal vandalism is a result of the following: (in descending order of cost to schools)

Damage to equipment and machines	$ 54,713.00
Damage to lockers	37,113.00
Cafeteria equipment and supply damage	29,122.00
Damage to supply and storerooms	20,593.00
False alarms--elec. eqpt. and fire alarm boxes	9,083.00
Locks, globes, fire extinguishers, etc.	7,283.00
Damage to bookstore and book storage	6,474.00
Loss or damage to official documents	236.00

Vandalism - External

The total financial cost to schools for external vandalism is $548,601.00. The major portion of this amount, 52% or $286,907 is a result of damage and breakage of exterior windows. An additional 16% (89,864) is the cost to school districts for damage to exterior doors and lighting; and 9% (49,056) for defacing of exterior walls.

The additional 23% or $122,474 includes damage to school grounds, roofs and gutters, athletic fields, lighting, school buses, driver education vehicles and to playgrounds.

The total financial cost to suburban Cook County school districts for both internal and external vandalism is $1,135,552.00.

Hazards - Fires, Explosions, Floods, Bomb Incidents

The total financial cost to schools for various hazards is $202,089.00. The majority of the hazards occurring deliberately are internal fires at a cost of $133,316.00 and accidental floods at a cost of $49,724.00. It should be pointed out that one fire at the Lowell-Longfellow School in District 152 was responsible for a financial cost of $100,000.

Expulsions/Suspensions

It is disturbing to note that with the enormous expense of deliberate vandalism in Cook County schools, only 87 of the 296 students or 29% of total suspensions in Cook County districts resulted from students involved in vandalism, and only 16 expulsions were issued for apprehended vandals.

Summary

Seventy five percent of vandalism occurs after school hours compared to 22% during school hours when there is adequate supervision of school buildings. Only 23% of the school vandals were apprehended by school authorities, and 34% of that number were referred to the police.

VANDALISM SURVEY RESULTS

BURGLARY - THEFT - PROPERTY DESTRUCTION

Number of School Districts in Suburban Cook County:
115 Elementary
27 Secondary
1 Unit
143 Total

Number of School Buildings in Suburban Cook County:
645 Elementary
68 Secondary
4 Unit
717 Total

I. METHODS OF PROTECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

	Yes	No
A. Schools employing personnel for safety and security during the regular school days.	113	538
Number of security persons employed: 233		
B. Police personnel working in security in school:	38	597
Number of persons: 29		
C. Private security agency:	31	607
D. Number of schools with security people in uniform:	36	438
E. Hours of security patrol:		
1. 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	36	251
2. 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.	55	243
3. 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.	27	253

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I. METHODS OF PROTECTION AND SURVEILLANCE (continued)

	Yes	No
F. Type of mechanical burglary protection system used:		
1. Ultrasonic	93	419
2. Infrared	21	442
3. Other: Includes: burglar alarm, electric eye, radar and magnetic door, microwave, magnetic circuit breaker, security lights, monitored telephone line, electric tape, telephone alarm, wired detectors, intercom, bell, alarm, bugged doors, sound system, magnetic door switches, and contact circuit.	78	1
G. Fire alarm system monitored at:		
1. Administrative center	47	367
2. School building	447	95
3. Fire station	397	172
4. Police station	247	257
H. Heating system is monitored at:		
1. Administrative center	35	371
2. School Buildings	503	98
3. Fire station	55	377
4. Police station	32	385
I. Records kept on burglary, property destruction, theft, arson, etc.	318	100
1. Daily	219	145
2. Weekly	79	185
3. Monthly	222	157

II. VANDALISM	Accidental	Deliberate or Malicious	Approximate Cost to School Dists.
A. Internal (within building)			
1. Defacing and damage to walls, furniture, blinds, curtains, drinking fountains, etc.	177	529	$112,515.00
2. Damage to library: books, supplies including a-v equipment	275	424	108,261.00
3. Damage to furniture: chairs, desks, etc.	307	435	72,755.00
4. Damage to washrooms: waste baskets, light fixtures, etc.	109	458	65,167.00
5. Damage to internal windows and doors	183	177	58,410.00
6. Damage to equipment: business machines, athletic eqpt. industrial arts, etc.	121	159	54,713.00
7. Damage to lockers	129	256	37,113.00
8. Damage to cafeteria: thefts and damage of food and eqpt.	24	102	29,122.00
9. Damage to supply and storerooms: custodial, shop, gym, office	58	88	20,593.00
10. False alarms Frequency: 626	275	369	9,083.00
11. Other Includes: locks, globes, bicycles, fire extinguishers, phone	4	45	7,283.00
12. Damage to bookstore and book storage areas	20	30	6,474.00
13. Loss or damage to official documents: report cards, records, etc.	8	18	236.00
		TOTAL FINANCIAL COST TO SCHOOLS FOR INTERNAL VANDALISM	$586,957.00

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II. VANDALISM (continued)	Accidental	Deliberate or Malicious	Approximate Cost to School Dists.
B. External (outside building)			
1. Damage to exterior windows	452	2558	$286,907.00
2. Damage to exterior doors lighting, doorways, etc.	98	464	89,864.00
3. Defacing of exterior walls	21	514	49,056.00
4. Damage to grounds: landscaping	56	220	35,543.00
5. Roof and gutter damage	24	112	24,393.00
6. Damage to high school athletic fields: track, stadium, lighting, bleachers, etc.	13	31	19,482.00
7. Damage to mechanical equipment			
a. Buses	6	65	14,119.00
b. Driver education vehicles	14	14	7,002.00
c. Other	0	7	3,975.00
8. Damage to elementary school	30	210	13,151.00
9. Other	1	14	5,109.00
TOTAL FINANCIAL COST TO SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR EXTERNAL VANDALISM			$548,601.00

TOTAL FINANCIAL COST TO SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL VANDALISM $1,135,552.00

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III. HAZARDS	Accidental	Deliberate or Malicious	Approximate Cost to School Dists.
A. Fires			
1. Internal	15	69	$133,316.00
2. External	7	20	9,714.00
B. Floods	49	13	49,724.00
C. Bomb Scares	0	154	4,225.00
D. Explosions			
1. Internal	2	3	2,600.00
2. External	0	2	0
E. Other	0	3	2,510.00

TOTAL FINANCIAL COST TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR FIRES, EXPLOSIONS, FLOODS, ETC. $202,089.00

VI. EXPULSIONS/SUSPENSIONS		Yes	No
A. Number of expulsions issued for apprehended vandals:		16	493
Number of expulsions since September 1973:	16		
B. Number of schools where suspensions are issued for apprehended vandals:		87	417
Number of suspensions since September 1973:	296		

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V. SUMMARY INFORMATION	Number or percentage
A. Percentage of vandalism DURING SCHOOL HOURS	22%
B. Percentage of vandalism AFTER SCHOOL HOURS	75%
C. Percentage of vandals apprehended	23%
D. Percentage of vandals referred to police authorities	34%
E. Number of arrests made by police	275
F. Number of police complaints that have been signed	732

TOTAL FINANCIAL COST TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY FOR:

INTERNAL VANDALISM	$589,059.00
EXTERNAL VANDALISM	549,674.00
FIRES, EXPLOSIONS, FLOODS, ETC.	202,089.00
TOTAL	$1,233,606.26

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